



DEPARTMENT of the INTERIOR

news release

Fish and Wildlife Service

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FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE ISSUES POLICY ENFORCING AFRICAN IVORY BAN

Secretary of the Interior Manuel Lujan today announced the Interior Department's U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's policy for enforcing the June 9 ban on importation of African elephant ivory into the United States.

Under the ban, it is illegal to import African elephant ivory from any country. This ban covers commercial and non-commercial shipments (including through the mail) of raw or worked (carved) ivory, including antiques and items in personal accompanying baggage or household effects.

"Through its Law Enforcement Division, the Fish and Wildlife Service is working closely with the U.S. Customs Service, which is the first line of defense against unlawful importations," Secretary Lujan said. "By informing the public of this ban on ivory, we hope to prevent violations and serve the interest of elephant conservation."

The following are the only exceptions to the ban on the importation of ivory:

- o Importation of legally taken sport-hunted trophies with proper documentation is permitted from the following elephant-producing countries: Botswana, Cameroon, Central African Republic, Congo, Ethiopia, Malawi, Mozambique, South Africa, Zambia, and Zimbabwe.

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- o Shipments of ivory (both commercial and non-commercial) consigned to a carrier on or before June 9, 1989, will be allowed to be imported into the United States.
- o Items taken abroad for personal use prior to June 9, 1989, by U.S. citizens may be reimported only as part of a shipment of household effects.
- o Personal effects taken out of the United States after June 9, 1989, can be reimported provided they were registered with U.S. Customs prior to exportation.
- o Tourist souvenirs purchased before June 9, 1989 and imported before July 9, 1989, are permitted with accompanying documentation, such as a sales receipt.

The Fish and Wildlife Service cautions that U.S. citizens should take measures to protect ivory goods they already own but plan to take out of the country. These items must be properly registered prior to departure with a U.S. Customs officer by filling out a certificate of registration (Customs Form 4457).

If a person acquires ivory not covered by these limited exemptions and brings it into the United States, it is a violation of the law. The goods will be seized and the traveler may be subject to a fine of \$5,000.

Americans planning to travel abroad should check with their local U.S. Fish and Wildlife Law Enforcement or U.S. Customs offices for information concerning ivory.